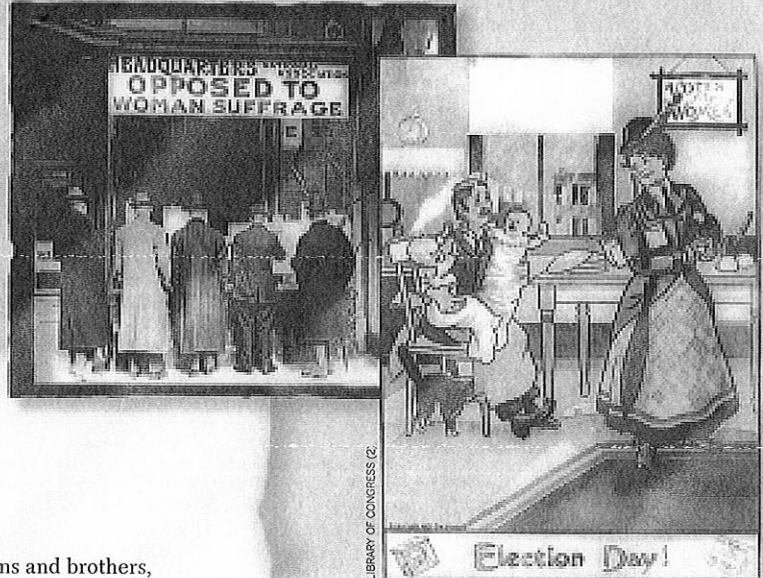


# ANTI-SUFFRAGE

## UNDERSTANDING *the* OPPOSITION

**I**t's hard to imagine that until 1920, there was intense debate about whether women should be allowed to vote in the United States. But Alice Paul and her colleagues faced fierce opposition—from women as well as men. The handbill, cartoon and photograph on this page help explain some of the objections that opponents of suffrage, known as anti-suffragists, raised, as well as some of the strategies they employed. Study these primary-source documents. Then answer the questions below.



### Ten Reasons Why The Great Majority of Women Do Not Want the Ballot.

BECAUSE they have not lost faith in their fathers, husbands, sons and brothers, who afford full protection to the community, there being no call for women to relieve them of the task.

BECAUSE women realize that when they become voters they will in consequence have to serve as jurors, and be compelled to hear all the repugnant details incident to murder trials and trials for other crimes disclosing unspeakable wickedness. Jury service is abhorrent to every normal woman.

BECAUSE in political activities there is constant strife, turmoil, contention and bitterness, producing conditions from which every normal woman naturally shrinks.

BECAUSE the primary object of government is to protect persons and property. This duty is imposed by nature upon man, the women being by nature absolved from assuming a task to them impossible.

BECAUSE when women noisily contest and scramble for public office—woman pitted against woman—they write an indictment of womankind against which all right-minded women strenuously protest.

BECAUSE women can accomplish more through counselling than they ever can attain through commanding.

BECAUSE woman suffrage will not enhance peace and harmony in the home, but, on the contrary, in the heat of a campaign, it is sure to bring about dissension and discord.

BECAUSE Nebraska women are already enjoying a greater measure of protection and privilege under the laws than do women of any state where women vote.

BECAUSE the woman worker wants rest and quietude—not political excitement.

BECAUSE every reason supporting the claim of women to vote supports also the right of women to be consulted as to whether they shall or shall not be given the ballot.

Issued by the Nebraska Association Opposed to Women Suffrage, Omaha, Nebraska.

### For Discussion or Writing

1. What conceptions of women, men, family and government are presented in these documents? How is a “normal woman” defined?
2. What were some of the primary arguments against suffrage for women? Of these, which seem most reasonable to you? Which seem most far-fetched?
3. Describe the scene portrayed in the cartoon. Whose fears about women’s changing roles are expressed?
4. How do you imagine Alice Paul would respond to the cartoonist, the author of the flyer and the men in the photograph?

### PAST TO PRESENT

What barriers to full equality between women and men still exist in American society? What do you think accounts for these obstacles? For example, why do you think the United States has never had a female President?